

*Citation for published version:*

Merchant, S 2016, '(Re)constructing the tourist experience? Editing experience and mediating memories of learning to dive', *Leisure Studies*, vol. 35, no. 6, pp. 797-808. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2015.1128477>

*DOI:*

[10.1080/02614367.2015.1128477](https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2015.1128477)

*Publication date:*

2016

*Document Version*

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication](https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2015.1128477)

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor and Francis in *Leisure Studies* on 11/01/16, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/02614367.2015.1128477>

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## **Abstract**

Through an analysis of the mediative techniques involved in the production of videographic tourist memorabilia (specifically souvenir DVDs of learning to SCUBA dive), in this paper I seek to render visible the often unconsidered aspects of visual media production that result in, not only visual images themselves, but also by extension, the construction of alternate realities of leisure space and tourist performance. A connectionist approach to the study of memory is advocated highlighting that mediatory technologies, whilst acting as stimulants for recollection, actually inform and construct memories rather than transmitting realistic snippets of past experience. In the paper it is questioned whether 'authenticity' is a relevant frame of reference bearing in mind that the 'post-tourist' is often perfectly aware of the lack of authenticity in many tourist activities and happy to go along with a pretence. With this in mind, the paper concludes by stating that 'reality' is arguably being edited-out of memories concerning tourism's places and practices through the production of commercially driven and produced 'souvenirs'. For the most part, the paper focuses on the experiences of young tourists between the ages of 18-25, the key demographic attracted to the field site in question.

### **Key Words:**

Leisure, tourism, mediation, staging, memory, extreme sport, visual practices, SCUBA diving

## Introduction

“I’ve been travelling for 9 months now and have collected 11 souvenir DVDs. From America, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Cuba, Honduras, New Zealand ...of all sorts of activities like bungee jumping, snorkelling, shark diving, hand gliding, rafting...one a of a trek...all the theme parks in the US do them.”

Emma

At a time when audio-visual technologies significantly infiltrate young (and indeed older) people’s practices and experiences, the structure and content of personal and collective memory is becoming evermore mediated and transmogrified (Bolter and Grusin 1999, Jansson 2007, Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier 2009). As such, future understandings of self and place are entering a slippery realm where reality and imagination combine in the construction of virtual histories, ever in process yet never fully loyal to the original instance of experience. This digitization of the young person’s gaze has resulted in increased attention being given to technological mediators such as digital cameras and camcorders by scholars (Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier 2009), particularly at a time when the use of such imagery on social media platforms becomes so integral to the portrayal of the self, the construction of the generic gap year experience and the on-going development (or *becoming*) of each young person’s identity. As Lupton (2014:164) argues, “it is not only the data or images produced via digital technologies that are important to research and theorise, but also how the objects themselves [...] are used in practice”. This paper explores such debates in a leisure tourism context, one which, not exclusively but predominantly, caters for young people between the ages of 18-25 (henceforth referred to as ‘young tourists’).

The Island of Koh Tao has an established reputation as one of Asia’s most popular party and learn-to-dive centres. As part of such learn-to-dive experiences, it is becoming common practice for trainees to be filmed during the final stages of their open water training. As the above quote illustrates, this practice is not limited to the SCUBA scene, but rather is widespread within the tourism sector, but particularly routine within the Adventure Tourism/Sport Tourism industries. Tourists who engage in such activities are commonly given the opportunity to buy a souvenir DVD featuring their skilled selves in the thick of the action, which they can then take home to show their families and friends or to upload on to social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. It is argued that people have a vested interest in such ‘objects’ as “they come to serve as material triggers of personal memories” (van Dijck 2007, p.xii). The mediated memories triggered by souvenir DVDs though are not mere extensions of the brain, rather they are the products of a “complex interaction between brain, material objects and the cultural matrix from which they arise” (van Dijck 2007, p.xii). Thus, using the SCUBA context and training DVD as a case study, in this paper I explore how video technologies can alter young tourists’ understandings of underwater space and the memories they develop of embodied actions and experiences.

Firstly I provide an overview of existing research which has taken the role of photography and videography seriously in relation to tourist activities. Secondly, I go on to outline the history of where philosophers from Descartes (Sutton 1998) to Bergson (2004) and Deleuze (2003), believe memory to be located, moving chronologically from a 'static, files in the mind' theorisation to an approach that emphasises the on going process of becoming *in conjunction with* stimuli from cultural artefacts, such as DVDs (Marks 2000), and the present. By acknowledging that matter 'informs' recollection, the paper will be set up to consider what entwining these elements means for memory, when their materiality (screen, DVD etc.) is not only an instigator for remembering but also transformative in itself (Damasio 1999).

Thirdly, I consider the precise ways young tourists' original experiences are altered in the production process. Including an outline of the technological means by which images are 'improved' to become visually more stunning and vivid than the often dark and almost monochrome blue scenes that are seen in situ. Finally, the paper will consider the mediation process from the perspective of the young people who took part in the study. Following Barthes (1981), I will consider the various means by which young tourists perform and present themselves whilst being filmed, in order to illustrate that they want to see themselves, and be seen by others, at a later date, in a certain light (for example as adventurous, skilled, happy, etc.).

Having covered these themes the paper will conclude by asking what these mediatory acts and processes mean for young tourists' individual and shared constructions of space and young tourists' identity. I will argue that the souvenir DVDs encourage the creation of a 'virtual consciousness', where memories are informed by technologies that picture a place that never looked so polished and of a person who (at times at least) was acting for the camera.

## **Image capturing and tourist practices**

For the most part it is photography that has received considerable attention within touristic studies of identity and place, rather than videography. This is predominantly due to the relatively recent accessibility of cheap and compact filmic equipment and production facilities, to the general population. However, the increase in purchases of video cameras led Tagg (1982) and Stallabrass (1996) to declare that videography has followed photography, "on the one hand democratizing aesthetic production and, on the other, colonizing an ever-expanding range of spaces and experiences" (Crang 1997a:363). Additionally though, the advantage of videography is that it also allows what Crang (1997b) describes as 'levity and enjoyment' to be captured (as well as sound, motion and a sense of chronology), whilst also adhering to Sontag's utilitarian notion of imagery existing as proof that "the trip was made, the project was carried out, the fun was had" (Sontag 1977:8).

Dating further back, the picturing practices of photography have been argued to be inextricably linked with tourist activities since the first Grand Tour (Albers and James 1988, Cohen et al. 1992, Crang 1997a, Feighey 2003, Garlick 2002, Griffin 1988, Markwell 1997). Indeed, Belk and Hsiu-yen Yeh (2010) argue that photography and tourism owe the success of each to the other. Heidegger goes so far as to say that the

enframing powers of technology were the key characteristic in the turn to modernity, "the conquest of the world as picture" (1977, p.134), a way of "revealing the world in which everything within it comes to be seen as, 'standing-reserve', that is, as something that 'stands by', as a resource, rationally ordered and ready to be exploited" (Garlick 2002: 293). Thus, resources can become knowable and systematised, as Sontag states "through being photographed, something becomes part of a system of information, fitted into schemes of classification and storage" (1977:156). This way of thinking about visual imagery perpetuated the myth that photography is a realist medium, a representative of truth and science (Slater 1995). By extension then, photographic practices positioned tourists as disconnected and disengaged from the people and landscapes which they came across, with the camera epitomizing the occularcentric and objective nature of their travel experience (Adler 1989, Craik 1997, Urry 1992).

Whilst the study of photography and tourism has been prolific and sustained, actual studies that analyse tourist produced imagery until late, have been rare. As Garrod (2009) has explained, studies of images tended to concentrate on those produced by professional photographers which appear in brochures, posters, postcards etc. (For example Dann 1988, Edelheim 2007, Hunter 2008, Pike 2002, Scarles 2004). In recent years studies concerning the specificities of tourist produced imagery have opened up theorizations of how and why tourists engage with the practice of photography and/or videography. Indeed research has begun to explore the ways in which tourists produce and consume touristically through the medium of photography (Caton and Santos 2008, Haldrup and Larsen 2004, Larsen 2006, Scarles 2009). This paper sits somewhere in between both such approaches, as on the one hand, the analysis focuses on professionally produced imagery that is burned onto a DVD, but on the other, this footage is of the young tourists themselves as they learn to negotiate the underwater world as part of the PADI, Open Water, SCUBA dive training. Consequently, the paper cross cuts the aims of previous research, attempting to deconstruct the image making processes which contribute to the production of the underwater souvenir DVD (processes which are common within broader tourism film productions such as adverts, documentaries and interactive entertainment stations), whilst also taking into account the potential for memory manipulation such media may have on tourist divers. This, I would argue, could be synonymous with the even more contemporary "selfie"/ "head-cam" productions people create for themselves. In line with this, within a tourism context, Larsen has argued that "instead of understanding photographs as reflections or distortions of a pre-existing world, photography can be understood as a technology of worldmaking" (2006, p.78)

Considering why people choose to capture their experiences and extending the argument above- that visual practices allow for an ordering of understandings of place and people- Garlick (2002) has noted that, whilst picturing practices dislocate visual stimuli from the sites in which they were first conceived, they become re-ordered into sites of self representation, contributing to the construction of memory and self identity. Thus Garlick (2002) links photography to the Foucauldian concept of one's 'life as a work of art'. Pictures, and more recently footage of holiday activities can be captured and brought back for a number of reasons, but existing research has

pinpointed two in particular, which I later argue are not mutually exclusive, yet result in a tension over meaning construction in the production process. On the one hand then, images are taken, uploaded to social media in situ and/or brought home for public viewing. This fits with Garrod's (2009:347) contention that photos (and by extension film) become part of a hermeneutic cycle of "tourism (re)production, in which tourists seek to acquire photographic images of the place they are visiting so that they can prove to others that they have been there". On the other hand though, this objective collation of time and place has been deconstructed of late, with tourists themselves being written back into the story as embodied active agents within the context of image production (Haldrup and Larsen 2004). As such, the agency of the tourist is implicated into the 'narrative construction', consequently feeding back into Foucault's idea of 'life as a work of art'.

In Foucault's words, "arts of existence" are "those reflective and voluntary practices by which men [sic] not only set themselves rules of conduct, but seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and certain stylistic criteria" (Foucault 1992, p.10-11). In other words, not only is an idealized self-image constructed and manipulated to present to others, but also for the self. Keep-sakes or souvenirs become the instigators of memory work concerning past activities, and on one's gap year these may allow for a certain 're-configuring' of the self, due to increased freedom and an escape from the lifestyle constraints of the home (Urry 1992). A prefigured scene can be transformed into a souvenir for times to come (Crang 1997a). Even with a postmodern resurgence in 'retro' photo/video-graphic artefacts such as Polaroid Prints, Photo-Booth Strips and Hi-8 tapes, such vintage-esque imagery serve as a marker of devotion to the disjointed styling practices of the time. This then, is not just retrospective use of imagery, but it informs the imagery's very construction. Memories and their 'tone' are not merely *captured* in the process of taking a photo or video but are often *created* in the very act. However, whilst this may change the way we think about tourist performance and imagery, it does not necessarily reflect insincerity in the image production process. What it does do though, is further infiltrate the practice of image capture within the tourist practice and performance, rendering the various stages of capture and production as impossible to think about in isolation. This highlights that photo- (or video-) graphy is a social performance in itself, not simply a way of transparently capturing the tourist performances taking place *beyond* the viewfinder (Crang 1997a, Crang 1997b, Edensor 2001, Haldrup and Larsen 2004, MacCannel 1979).

Before turning to the precise ways in which the alterations and mediations noted above are made, I first move on to provide a background to theoretical understandings of memory.

### **Situated Memory?**

In John Sutton's (1998) book *Philosophy and memory: Descartes to Connectionism*, the author outlines a timeline of conflicting theorisations of memory's location. It is argued that throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the locus of memory was for the most part believed to rest solely within the mind, stored in a manner similar to the

files in a filing cabinet, ready to be retrieved upon being stimulated by an object or image, or more simply, upon the request of the thinker. These stored memories were considered to be hermetically sealed from the changing world in which the perceiver was living- stable in the face of time and unchanging with context. However, in the twentieth century, conceptualisations began to shift, and in so doing, highlighted the interconnectedness that exists between time, context and memory. Bergson's work in this domain was particularly important in changing previous ways of thinking about memory. In *Matter and Memory* (2004) Bergson explains that in perceiving matter we do not simply perceive an object in its present state. By contrast, we mix in with our real-time perception the myriad recollections that we have gained previously, making our understandings complicated deeply by the temporal- 'enriching' perception of the present yet making it vastly subjective. Thus, memory is seen to be an ever evolving, inter-subjective thread which confirms and simultaneously troubles our understanding of the past, at once alluding to encounters which took place but conflating the details of this particular past with those of subsequent pasts, as well as the present. Drawing on Bergson, van Dijck (2007, p.30) explains this more clearly, stating that "the present dictates memories of the past [...] the brain does not store memories but recreates the past each time it is invoked [so that] the memory of the past serves as a base". Incorporating and building upon Bergson's work, Deleuze (2003) tells a similar story of the intersubjective nature of perception and memory, although he relates this specifically to the receipt and visualisation of cinematic images. Deleuze argues that,

"Instead of a continued memory, as function of the past which reports a story, we witness the birth of memory, as function of the future which retains what happens in order to make it the object to come of the other memory... [M]emory could never evoke and report the past if it had not already been constituted at the moment when past was still present, hence in an aim to come. It is in fact for this reason that it is behaviour: it is in the present that we make memory, in order to make use of it in the future when the present will be past".  
(2005, p.334)

Therefore, we have moved from thinking about memory as being firm and steady, to instead as fractured; "from a history sought in the continuity of memory to a memory cast in the discontinuity of history" (Hoskins 2001, p.334). This troubles our conceptualisations of "what has been, can, and should be remembered" (Hoskins 2001, p.334).

In this paper I want to think of memories in this way. Not as a collection of static, files in the mind, but rather I want to think about a re-collection as something which is "rewritten each time" it is intentionally sought, or brought to the fore subconsciously (van Dijck 2007, p.32). However, whilst this 'rewriting' may enrich our understanding of the way we perceive the *present*, at the same time it troubles the extent to which we can rely on personal memory to gain realistic accounts of the past. If we intersect here a further mediating player, that of visual media (in this case souvenir DVDs of learning to dive), the blurring of memory, reality and digitally altered

imagery would make for a recollection which is even further removed from the original experience, as the merging of “external” and “internal” images converge into experience (van Dijck 2007, p.125).

The fluid and fluctuating nature of memory is something which psychologists have devoted considerable time and effort to comprehend (Johnson et al. 1988). Whilst a number of scholars, including myself, have highlighted the benefits of using visual imagery to bring to cognition elements of ‘genuine’ experience which previously eluded research participants (Merchant 2011, Pink 2006, Scarles 2004, Spinney 2006), of more relevance to this paper is the work emanating from psychology which explicitly troubles the role visual media plays in contributing to significant memory *alterations* over time. Such work builds on earlier studies that built into their methodology exposure to narratives of plausible events rather than visual images in their research design (Hyman and Billings 1998, Hyman and Loftus 1998, Neisser et al. 2000, Weiser 1990, Williams and Banyard 1998). Irrespective of the method though, psychologists have gone so far as to demonstrate that not only are research participants capable of recollecting ‘aspects’ of previous experience that are incorrect or fabricated, but with the aid of visual images, the participants can even fabricate complete events or believe themselves to have attended events fabricated by the researcher (Loftus and Pickrell 1995, Wade et al. 2002). In fact, it has been argued that memory performance, upon receipt of misleading information can cause between a thirty and forty percent deficit in accuracy (Loftus and Pickrell 1995). This type of memory alteration has been labelled ‘retroactive interference’, the act of altering memory formation after the event (as opposed to ‘proactive interference’ in which memory is disrupted by events that occurred previous to experience) (Loftus and Pickrell 1995).

It is argued that people “tend to think of photographs as frozen moments in time, place faith in them and see them as reliable representations of the past” (Wade et al. 2002, p.597). Over the last 20 years in particular, witnessing and producing visual images has become particularly commonplace, at times even overwhelming, within our daily encounters. Since the ‘digital turn’ this has been intensified further still (Laurier et al. 2008). Outside of the touristic literature reviewed above, Hoskins similarly (2001) explains that; the desire to capture and store memories electronically, in order to compliment our own memory capabilities, whilst not always necessarily the main reason for engaging in photographic and videographic activities, is a process that has increased in demand, particularly over the last fifteen years. In conjunction with this, is the increased availability of relatively cheap and accessible image manipulation and film editing software, that further disrupts our understandings of the real and the altered.

It is argued that photographs require less “constructive processing than do narratives to cultivate a false memory” (Wade et al. 2002, p.602). If this is true, and research findings seem to corroborate with this theory, then surely, by extension, watching a film of a tourist experience in which the consumer features, would prove an even more trustworthy medium of representing past experiences of space and self. As Loftus and Pickrell (1995, p.725) state;



“After receipt of new information that is misleading in some way, people make errors when they report what they [originally] saw [...] the new, post-event information often becomes incorporated into recollection, supplementing or altering it sometimes in dramatic ways. New information invades us, like a Trojan horse, precisely because we do not detect its influence”.

Whilst the souvenir DVDs that form the subject of this paper, were not of a fabricated event, they were filmed to certain aesthetic trends of the time. Films were heavily edited and visually modified to produce a product that emphasises the ‘positive’ aspects of learning to dive, whilst downplaying the ‘negative’ aspects of learning to dive.

### **Methodological context**

The illustrative quotes and descriptions in this paper emanate from just over a month of ethnographic fieldwork of training and working as an underwater videographer in the popular gap year destination of Koh Tao, Thailand. As part of this role, learner divers would be filmed typically during the last two dives of the PADI Open Water course and consisted of scenes of skills training (mask removal and clearing, compass navigation, regulator retrieval and buoyancy control), with the remainder of each dive being free for ‘exploration’ under the supervision of the instructor.

As the videographer, I aimed to film the learner divers individually and as groups. I tried to film them looking, moving, and interacting as well as the environment and wildlife with which they were interacting. As detailed in the latter sections of this paper, the footage would then be edited and screened to the learner divers after which they were given the opportunity to purchase their souvenir DVD.

### **Image Production**

Having contextualised the role of image making practices in tourist activity, and having considered the mediative capacities of visual imagery to pro- and retro-actively influence memory (and by extension understanding of place and self), this section articulates the specific ways in which meditative practices infiltrate a dive industry that predominantly caters for young tourists. Whilst learning to become an underwater videographer I was instructed to shoot, edit and represent the tourists and the underwater world in a relatively contrived manner. Each aspect of the process is repeatedly rehearsed. The structure of each film is virtually identical yet for the young tourists, each DVD seems personally tailored. Producing films in this manner meets the standards and expectations of underwater videography employers and professional underwater videographer training certification agencies who have developed an efficient, engaging and aesthetically pleasing format of production (typically enabling one film of around 20 minutes to be shot, edited, produced and screened within a twenty four hour period).

The cinematographic codes imbued in this format are the culturally constructed ideals of the wider tourist and (the prevalent Gap Year) context. However, they are essentially a compromise between the videographer's capability, creativity, time constraints, the sophistication of the camera equipment and editing suite, the 'performance' of the wildlife, weather conditions and the tourists themselves, as well as the structure of the PADI Open Water course.

Within the broader film framework, certain stylistic techniques are encouraged. A variety of shot types and lengths featuring a mixture of diver action, wildlife and camaraderie are balanced. Thus contrary to filming in a fluid and continuous way that is more akin to human perception, the film is made to look more interesting, by leaving out the in-between (so called "boring") moments of perception. The film still alludes to the sequence of events which lead up to the climax of each major wildlife encounter, but the time invested in the search for something 'interesting' to see is portrayed proportionally condensed. Eye level and low-level angles are deemed more aesthetically pleasing underwater, as they set coral and divers against the blue of the sea and can silhouette divers against a backdrop of solar rays. Adding the occasional Dutch tilt<sup>1</sup> can give a film a more contemporary feel and when combined into a tracking or flyover shot can break up the monotony of continually shooting movement horizontally. These techniques allude to the freedom of movement offered by the viscosity of the water, as to pull them off successfully and smoothly the videographer must roll, stretch and tilt their body with advanced buoyancy skill. Similarly though, picturing the ocean from such 'artistic' angles, is not reflective of the views witnessed by the learners who move clumsily and disjointedly above the coral. 'Bookending' the underwater footage of each film are commonly contextual shots of people and places. Jaunty angles of learners 'gearing up', individual zoom-ins, close-ups of boat and school names, company logos, staff banter, staged waving, engineered group shots, with sunset backdrops highlighting the light-hearted and collegial atmosphere in tropical paradise.

Such tactics, tried and tested, evoked the following type of response from the young tourists "Aaaaahhh, I'll miss you guys!" (Sarah) and "oh, that's it! I don't want to go home now" (Andrea). However, the tension between the structured and predetermined stylisation of the footage seems almost at odds with the notion of nostalgia. Defined as a subjective sentimental longing to a past event or place, it is surprising that watching an almost generically arranged film has the potential to induce such feelings. Yet the young tourists seem unaware of the routinised nature and construction of not only their DVD but indeed their entire learning to dive experience (or if they are aware of this then they actively go along with the act). This may raise issues surrounding the extent to which relations with videographers, other divers and dive staff are genuine and whether the selective attitude towards what is captured is representative of tourist experience or rather becomes a work of aesthetic appreciation in which tourists feature.

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<sup>1</sup> A shot which is framed at a slight angle

In addition to adhering to certain 'ways of shooting', manipulation of the sequence and aesthetics of the day's diving would continue in the editing stage of production. Editing is an artistic and technical process that requires manipulating shots into an order that enhances the quality of the visual output. Shots may be deleted, added, rearranged. For example, if a number of scenery shots have been filmed on the boat in a row, they might be used to separate the sequences of each diver 'gearing up'. Similarly, if footage of an underwater creature is too dark or out of focus to be digitally improved, older footage of the same species might be integrated into the sequence so as not to disappoint the learners who would often express excitement at the prospect of being able to re-witness certain creatures. For example Alex commented upon re-surfacing after his second dive; *"did you get the ray? You got so close, I'd like to see it close up, I was too scared of its tail though"*. This is perhaps the most ethically dubious element of the film making process<sup>2</sup> as scenes that were never seen are integrated seamlessly amongst those that were, significantly challenging the perceptive skills of the viewers during the screening. The ease with which the divers bought into such alterations either demonstrates their desire to believe in the supposed 'quality' of their experience and/or the trick of 'blind' trust they hold in the videographer. Here then not only is the temporal aspect of the footage re-arranged, but the images are also colour corrected. An underwater camera is fitted with a red filter that maintains the variety of colours that people are used to seeing in underwater documentaries and films. However, as the depth of the filmed dives varies this can lead to variations in colour intensity throughout the captured footage. To a certain extent, colours can be put back in to the images or taken away to maintain a 'realistic' looking white balance, and so the levels of the footage are played with to achieve this.

The human eye though, is neither equipped with a red filter, nor capable of these sophisticated alterations. Thus the images that are witnessed post this stage of editing were rarely originally perceived to be so colourful in real-time experience. By contrast, the deeper one dives, the more blue the scenery becomes, as the other colours of the spectrum are gradually filtered out. Divers would rarely comment on this (apparently not so) striking alteration to visual perception. This could be a consequence of the proactive interference that watching underwater films and documentaries has on the divers as well as the retroactive interference caused to their memory by watching their souvenir DVD. In other words, "the here and now" is considered to play as much a part in future recollections as the "there and then" (Barthes 1981, Hoskins 2001, p.335).

In addition to these alterations, further inputs supplement the visual images. Transitions, which seamlessly blur one underwater encounter into the next, allow sudden changes of scenery and activity to wash over the viewer, disguising the extent to which real-time experience has been cropped. Textual headings of dive site locations, fish names, dates etc. are added to remind the learners, when in some distant time in the future they will no longer be able to pin point the specific details of the course. And a further yet significant contextualising element is the sound track to the film. Faster paced songs are used for the land/boat sequences to gee up the

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<sup>2</sup> However such occasions did seem rare and were largely due to the failure of an intern to capture good quality shots in the first place, rather than representing the general ethos of the company.

audience and end on a high, with relaxed and calming songs being used for the underwater scenes. Like the footage the soundtrack is also edited, 4-5 songs cut and arranged to make the film seem longer (and hence better value for money), but equally they change up the pace to maintain the attention of the viewer/listener.

### **Performing the Learner-Diver-Tourist**

As I detailed above in relation to Foucault's notion of the 'self as a work of art' (1991), it is not just the prerogative of the videographer to try and polish the film to the highest possible aesthetic standards. The learner divers themselves, aware of the gazing eye of the camera, contribute to this process quite openly. In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes (1981) analyses the difficulty people have in converging a variety of self images into a single 'image' or representation. The moment a person feels the camera focusing upon them there is a conflicting desire to acquire a representation that at once captures an essence of reality, but this should also capture the subject in a favourable light so as to ensure that the resultant memory objects will invoke positive recollections and be seen by friends and family favourably. Thus, the aim is to merge one's 'idealized self-image' with one's 'public self image'. In order to carry this out the young tourists would act for the camera when they realised they were being filmed. Smoothing down hair, hiding and 'not now' gestures would indicate a state of unreadiness to be filmed, whereas 'thumbs up' gestures, performing summersaults, blowing bubble rings or shark impersonations were examples illustrative of a desire to be filmed as the central figure of a shot. Barthes (1981, p.10) explains his own experiences of being pictured in a similar fashion, "once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of "posing", I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image". Barthes (1981, p.11) continues, "I lend myself to the social game, I pose, I know I am posing, I want you to know that I am posing, but (to square the circle) this additional message must in no way alter the precious essence of my individuality".

van Djick, (2007: 101) referring to the process of photography comments, "when a picture is taken, we want those photographs to match our idealized self-image- flattering, without pimples, happy, attractive- so we attempt to influence the process by posing, smiling or giving instructions to the photographer". Thus, the camera's presence not only alters future memories through its mediatory technological apparatus, but it also encourages the young tourists to alter their real-time behaviour, *in order to* make the future memories more pleasurable and exciting. This is further intensified by the commonplace usage of visual productions as media of communication. Indeed sometimes, this is the primary role of the DVDs, as opposed to digital re-memory/embodying aids, their use is solely to portray the 'pleasurable' and 'exotic' experience of learning to dive to friends and family. Thus, "hyper-mediation creates a new vulnerability [...] a haunting anxiety for missing the 'right' opportunity for communication, and simultaneously the touristic experience itself" (Jansson 2007, p.16). The very act of having a camera present shapes the tourist performance into acts of self-presentation; the camera constructs the arena for acting and observing, "sacrificing the immediacy of experience and orienting activities to (future, distant) viewers" (Crang 1997a:365). Consequently, future memory can be determined as

much by the divers' imaginative capacities for action as the videographer's "tools for reconstruction" (van Dijck 2007, p.123).

## Discussion

In response to Jansson's (2007) call for further research on the nexus between tourism, media, communication and geography, here I have tried to render visible the often unconsidered aspects of visual media production that result in, not only visual images themselves, but also by extension, the construction of alternate realities of place, performance and identity by young tourists and the leisure tourist industry itself. The connectionist approach to the study of memory advocated throughout this paper refutes the notion that "memories are images of lived experiences stored in the brain that can be recalled without affecting their content" (van Dijck 2007, p.41). Furthermore, it highlights that mediatory technologies, whilst acting as stimulants for recollection actually inform and construct memories rather than transmitting realistic snippets of past experience. That is not to say that all recollection instigated by film is false or of fictitious events, nor that film is incapable of allowing for an embodying of the sights, sounds and actions presented on the screen. Rather, it is to say that the slippery nature of memory is formed in conjunction with the retroactive influence of the film, which when shot for a particular purpose (to be sold to a particular demographic) is accompanied with a set of experience and place enhancing techniques. From brighter, more colourful images, to seamlessly integrated never-before-seen creatures, footage is cropped, warped in time and made to shine. As Loftus and Pickerell (1995, p.725) have argued, "nearly two decades of research on memory distortion leaves no doubt that memory can be altered via suggestion [...], people can be led to remember their past in different ways", and indeed these acts of remembrance will be contingent upon the contexts in which they are taking place.

Thus, there is a tension here surrounding the discontinuity between the DVD as *souvenir* and the DVD as an economically driven, artistic production. The term '*souvenir*' literally refers to the act of remembering. The Oxford English Dictionary (2011) refers to a souvenir "as something (usually a small article of some value bestowed as a gift) which reminds one of some person, place, or event". In other words, the purpose of a souvenir is to bring back to consciousness the details relating to a particular experience. Those purchasing a 'dive encounter' souvenir DVD do so to be reminded of the scenery, the people, the animals, the culture and the forms of embodiment which they were exposed to throughout their PADI Open Water course and their time on the island of Koh Tao. Thus, it would follow that they would desire visual imagery that is 'as close' to their real-time encounter as possible. Or do they? It has been argued that the 'post-tourist' is often perfectly aware of the lack of authenticity in many tourist activities and happy to go along with the pretence (Urry 1992, Wang 1999). So if the adventure tourist experience 'charade' is entertaining in itself and replete with desirable outcomes, then is *authenticity* even a relevant frame of reference? (Hughes 1995).

Whilst authenticity is not at odds with the intentions of those producing the DVDs, it is equally not in sync either. As Laurier et al. (2008, p.9) argue, "the concerns film editors are orienting to as they assess footage, set edit points and so on are of a

filmic order rather than an epistemic one". The filmmakers know that young people don't want to be reminded of negative experiences, and they will only buy DVDs that show the above elements of experience in a favourable manner. Thus it is in the interest of the filmmaker to rely on artistic style, the digital techniques of footage alteration and the manipulability of memory to his/her advantage. This is further complicated by the fact that, for the young tourists the DVDs have two roles; the first as memory aids and the second being communication aids; to share the experience with others not present at the time. In this case the aim of the videographer fits well with the desires of the diver, who is less concerned with accuracy than with perpetuating an idealised representation of place, atmosphere and bodily skill. This may be particularly true due to the demographic and activity being analysed in this paper.

As already noted, the 'idealised self image' comes in to play at this point as divers consciously manipulate their behaviour and attitude when in front of the camera. As van Dijck (2007, p.127) argues "the act of memory [...] is already anticipated at the moment of shooting" and consequently filmed dives always involve "remembrance, fabrication and projection" (123). However, the argument here is that; even if the divers recognise the mediatory influence the videographer has had on the production process of film, and similarly recall the way in which they acted up for the camera, for the first two to three times they watch their souvenir DVD, the active practice of forgetting the additional (personal) information, eventually serves to confound the mediated re-presentation with personal recollection. Thus self-editing out 'reality' whilst becoming increasingly vested in the 'produced'. Comparative future research could explore whether the "selfie/headcam" prosumption movement yields lesser mediated memories/image products, particularly as the affordability, quality and ownership of associated technologies intensifies further (e.g. through Go Pro, mobile phone, wearable tech). This is particularly poignant in a context predominated by young people whose digital literacy may arguably be developing at a pace that renders the role of professional videographers and photographers somewhat obsolete (or at least reserved for more affluent members of society). This would further question the value of a 'DVD-as-product' i.e. as a material souvenir, as the materialities associated with image production become increasingly superfluous in an age of streaming, cloud storage and online sharing (although as stated the post-modern contradiction in this regard is that young people increasingly seek 'retro' material artefacts to enrich the Benjaminian (1999) 'aura' associated with their purchases.

In addition, whilst for the divers themselves there is the problem of the relatively fast deterioration of personal memory (in contrast to the mediated memories), for those who witness Koh Tao's dive sites for the first time on screen (family, friends, social network users), awareness of the extent to which the images are altered from reality is even more uncertain *from the initial observation*. Thus, as Hoskins (2001) argues, the medium actually becomes the memory as such viewers were not privy to the "intrinsic dynamic that exists...at the instantaneity of" the live encounter (Hoskins 2001, p.342). Ultimately then, neither featured nor unfeatured spectators will be capable of retrieving the 'fullness' of the moment. Jansson(2007) argues that visual media such as these DVDs then, digitally altered and rearranged,

become 'scripting devices' which are based on an "idealized framework for a touristic memoryscape" which are subsequently consumed by the public.

Thus, souvenir DVDs trouble the relationship that the individual young tourist has with the underwater seascape, but they equally construct Koh Tao into a magical tourist destination for those yet to visit. For the divers, previous experience becomes selectively remembered so that the seascape itself is recalled imaginatively as a tropical wonderland, saturated with colour, packed with activity and wildlife. Everyone is happy, everything goes to plan and everyone gets along in an overtly enthusiastic and outgoing manner. Discoveries are made one after another, new skills are always successfully demonstrated, qualifications are always achieved and at the end of the day the sun always sets majestically into the ocean's horizon. Thus, as van Dijck (2007) argues, moving images, edited, re-arranged, clipped, saturated and framed in a certain style can become contradictory and inconsistent signifiers of a relation *to* and a version *of* tourist space, that was never realised yet is processually remembered and shared with others. Whilst the example of souvenir DVDs of learning to dive are very specific artefacts of digitised and mediated versions of experience within a niche adventure tourism context, I argue that this paper additively contributes to a grander, overarching, contemporary academic focus on the pervasive influence of media technologies on the everyday lives of young people, and in particular on their role in the construction of both personal and spatial identities.

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